

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### *The Beginnings*

Water has been the life-blood of communities in the west. Once-arid lands have blossomed into productive fields as irrigation water has melted the earth's hard crust into fertile seedbeds.

Communities of the west, and Wasatch County as well, sprang up where lakes and streams offered available water supplies.

The community of Daniel, perhaps more than any other Wasatch settlement, has measured its history in terms of water developments. The town's name was derived in part from Daniels Creek, the major source of water. The creek had been named for Aaron Daniels, an early settler in the Charleston area, who had lived and worked along the stream.

Water also played the major role in one of the great engineering dramas to come out of the history of Daniel.

The settlers who founded Daniel in 1874 found the creek water ample for their needs. However, as more persons moved into the area, and water needs increased, the creek was no longer sufficient. Almost in anguish the residents watched the water level fall lower and lower, until by late summer each year the stream was reduced to a bed of dry rocks.

In 1879 the water shortage had become a crisis. Hiram Oaks and others determined to find new sources of water to serve the growing farming area. Water from the Daniels Canyon drainage that was being used by Charleston residents was purchased for \$930, but this still proved insufficient.

Investigations led the water users to the Strawberry River and its tributaries in eastern Utah. In addition to the fact that these streams were part of the Colorado drainage and bringing them to the Daniel area would be difficult, they were also on the Ute Indian Reservation and potential trouble with the federal government existed here.

However, the streams seemed the best possible water source at the time and plans were made to bring the water to Daniel. With only a crude spirit level and a plumb bob, Mr. Oaks, his son John, and William S. Bethers set out to survey a canal from the Strawberry area to Daniel Canyon.

Fathers and sons took contracts for a certain number of rods along the canal route, and then worked toward a standard set of specifications. Many of the ditches had to be dug around steep hillsides, through ledges and through forest lands. The men took their food and provisions with them, usually some flour, salt, baking powder, potatoes and "salt sides"

forced many from their homes, put many hundreds of acres of choice lands under water and brought decline to the community.

For some years the industrial leaders of Utah and the nation had realized the value of a reservoir along Provo River. The growth of Utah's major industrial centers, including Salt Lake City and Provo, created a vast need for water storage and new hydro-electric projects.

Thus, in 1938 work began on a reservoir in the lower part of Wasatch County, known as the Deer Creek project. Three years were required to complete the dam, which held back the water that began to inundate Charleston.

Even though Charleston's landscape has changed considerably over the years, the people have not changed. As the waters began to rise behind the dam, many were forced to move their homes to other areas. However, those who remained have held fast to the fundamental virtues of courage and integrity that have played so great a part in shaping the lives of men.

As far as can be determined, the first two white men to camp in the area of Charleston were Charles Shelton and his brother-in-law, Alex Wilkins. They were surveyors from Provo, and came into the valley to lay out some of the property.

The first settlers to take up land claims in Charleston were George Noakes, William Manning and Mr. Manning's son, Freeman, who were all from Provo. They came in the spring of 1859 and put in a limited crop of grain, but lost the entire crop through frost. William Manning built a log house and corral on his land, which was Charleston's first permanent building. During the winter of 1859-60, Mr. Manning wintered some stock on his ranch.

Others were soon attracted to the Charleston area and began to take up land for homes and farms. Ephraim K. Hanks, an able assistant to President Brigham Young in the pioneer trek of 1847 brought his family to Charleston to settle. Mr. Hanks, noted as a scout and peace-maker among the Indians, was also instrumental in saving the Martin Handcart Company from starvation in the snows of Wyoming.

Early in 1860 John S. McAfee and his family arrived from Scotland and began settling some of the lands near Mr. Hanks. Others who claimed farm land in the Charleston area were John Ritchie, Nymphas C. Murdock, William Wright, Lewis Mecham, Enoch Richins, George W. Brown, John Brown and William Bagley.

The government opened up Charleston to homesteading in 1862 and the records show that John Eldrige was one of the first to receive homestead rights. He died before his homesteading time was completed, but his wife, Sina Eldrige completed the homestead. Others who took out homestead rights in Charleston included David Walker, George Noakes, George T. Giles, Joseph E. Taylor, Stanley Davis, Joseph Bagley, Finity Daybell, Emmanuel Richman, George Simmons, Esther Davies, Joseph Nelson, Isaac Brown, William Winterton, David Young, Eli

Charleston  
Homestead  
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Gordon and John Winterton. Later, George T. Giles sold his homestead of 80 acres to Joseph Taylor for \$100, which doubled the size of the Taylor property.

By 1866, Indians had made life difficult in Provo Valley, and when the Black Hawk War broke out, settlers all over the valley banded together in Heber City for protection. Those in Charleston left their homes to seek the protection of a more populated area. Only the cattle were left behind, and many choice animals were shot or stolen by raiding Indian parties.

Late in 1867 the Indian difficulties subsided and some Charleston residents began moving back to claim their lands. Some new settlers also chose Charleston as their home, and by 1870 there were 15 families in the community.

Shortly after the city was resettled, steps were taken to secure a townsite on which a more compact community could be built. In 1873, twenty city blocks, each 26 rods square with four lots in a block were surveyed. The streets were surveyed to be six rods wide.

Indicative of the growth in Charleston is this newspaper report published in the Deseret News of May 2, 1873:

"Nymphas C. Murdock of Charleston, which is twenty-two miles from Provo and five miles from Heber City, called yesterday afternoon. He states that Charleston consists of about twenty-four families and that there is considerable farming land there still open to pre-emptors. A new brick meeting house is in the process of construction, and will shortly be completed. A small co-operative store is doing a good business, taking the produce of the people for goods and re-exchanging the produce again in other markets. Brother Murdock has charge of the store. There is no Post Office at Charleston yet, although it is on a direct mail route, but an application will soon be made by the people to the Department for that very essential convenience."

Charleston continued its civic growth as an unincorporated community for more than 20 years, and was ready for incorporation by December of 1899. The articles of incorporation were drawn up on December 30, 1899, with John M. Ritchie as president and William Daybell, G. W. Daybell, H. J. Wagstaff and George T. Baker as trustees. The first meeting of the board of the newly incorporated community was held January 10, 1900. Lucy A. Jacobs was named clerk with L. E. Barrows as town marshal.

During 1905 the community cooperated with Heber City and the county in building an electric power plant. A heavy debt was carried by the community for many years, but the plant became a successful venture and operated for several years. Joining again with the county in 1931 and 1932, Charleston officials bonded the community for \$100,000 and helped rebuild the power plant. The plant was able to compete with commercial power prices and still pay good dividends to supplement community funds. With funds from the power plant, all streets in the

town have been paved, money has been available for cemetery use and payments on the culinary water system have been made without additional tax levies. In addition, free electrical power has been supplied to various community and service groups.

One of the stalwart leaders in Charleston's civic growth has been



James Ritchie, president of the Charleston Town Board from 1909 to 1958.

James Ritchie, who became president of the town board on July 20, 1909, and has been serving continuously since that time. Many Charleston residents have served on the board with him. Present members include Dan Wright, Warren Farnsworth, Joseph Thacker and Duke Johnson.



The Charleston Town Board during the Wasatch County Centennial of 1959. Seated, left to right, Reed Edwards, H. Fred Price and L. Warren Farnsworth, president. Standing in the rear are Duke Johnson and Calvin Edwards.



The old Charleston Town Hall, used extensively until just recently.

Calvin Edwards is clerk, with Loraine Wright as treasurer and Van Ryan, sexton.

At the time Mr. Ritchie completed 49 years of service as town board president the incoming town board members honored him at a banquet for all residents of the community. Also honored was Loraine Wright who had served 24 years as town treasurer.

Industries in Charleston have played an important part in community life through the years. Many of the early industries were established to help sustain life in the community. Typical of these was the Upper Charleston Canal Co., the first such system in Charleston. Water was brought to the town by the system in 1875 through the efforts of



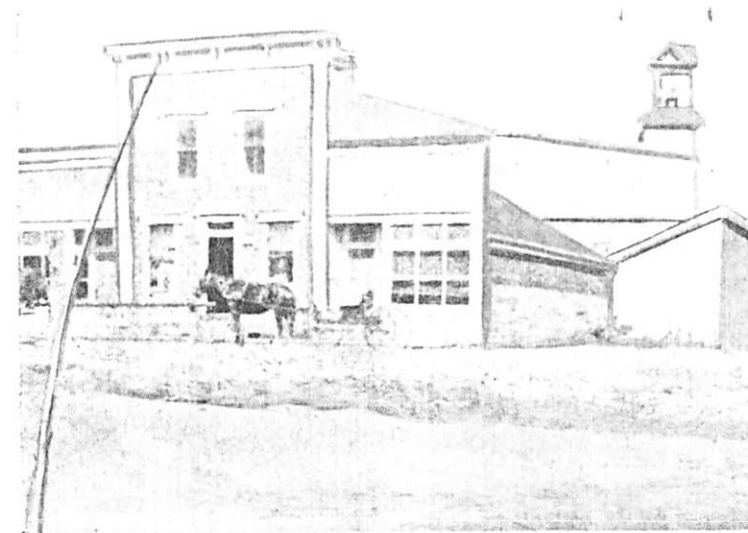
The Charleston canal.

William and John Winterton. The second irrigation company was the Spring Creek Canal Co., which was actually built to bring water to Heber, but was also extended on to Charleston. This system was enlarged in 1895 and became a major water distribution system to Charleston. The third irrigation company organized was the Charleston Lower Canal system which was begun in the year 1887 by Joseph R. Murdock and completed for use in June, 1888. These three systems still supply irrigation waters to Charleston today.

Early in Charleston's history a store was built by Nymphas C. Murdock. The first meat market was opened in 1880 by George Smith. He also bought and sold produce, hay, grain, butter and eggs. For many years Mr. Smith drove a wagon to Park City and often to Salt Lake City to peddle his merchandise.

George T. Baker, who had come to Charleston from American Fork in Utah County opened the first blacksmith shop in 1884 and successfully operated it for many years.

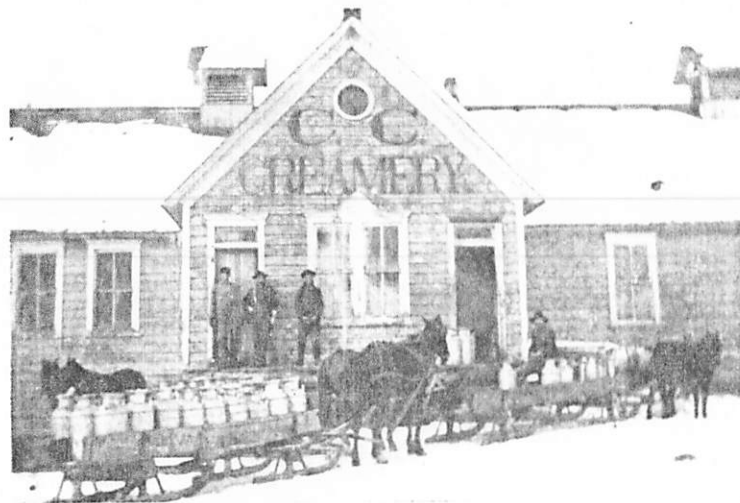
The first cooperative store in Wasatch County was built in Charleston by Joseph R. Murdock, and grew to have the largest volume of business of any store in the valley.



The Charleston Co-Operative Store, established by Joseph R. Murdock. This was the first co-op store in the valley and grew to have the largest business volume of any store in the county at that time.

In 1894 George Daybell built a small creamery on his farm and operated it there until business became too active to carry on in the buildings there. Mr. Daybell persuaded Joseph R. Murdock to buy shares in the business and the two men built a large structure and began operating the Charleston Co-Operative Creamery. The business grew rapidly until





The Charleston Co-Operative Creamery begun in 1894 by George Daybell and later expanded to this building by Mr. Daybell and Joseph R. Murdock.

they had seven milk wagons bringing in milk from local farms. They processed about 21,000 gallons of milk a day, and sold their butter, cheese and other milk products as far west as California and into the eastern markets.

Nymphas C. Murdock's son, Joseph, built a saw mill on the Provo River just north of Charleston, east of the Provo River bridge and west of the George Edwards home. A pond was also built in which water was stored over-night to provide a sufficient supply for the following day's operation. Logs were hauled from all parts of the valley to the saw mill which operated successfully for many years.

Through the years there have been many other businesses in Charleston. Emil Kohler ran a meat market, while Phoebe North Daybell had a millinery shop. Sarah Ritchie Wright had a fine dressmaking parlor, while Ernest Bates was proprietor of a popular ice cream and confectionary parlor. One of the state's leading mid-wives, Mrs. Etta Wagstaff, also practiced in Charleston.

Charleston's main industrial efforts, however, have centered around agriculture. Thousands of acres of meadow lands have supported large herds of dairy cattle, flocks of blooded sheep and hundreds of head of fine beef cattle.

From the farms near Charleston have annually come some 40,000 bushels of grain and hundreds of tons of hay. Bishop John M. Ritchie and some associates purchased and imported a herd of some 300 head of pure-bred Hereford cattle, and later Hyrum, Moroni and Fred Winter-ton and John C. Whiting imported fine breeding stock to make Charles-



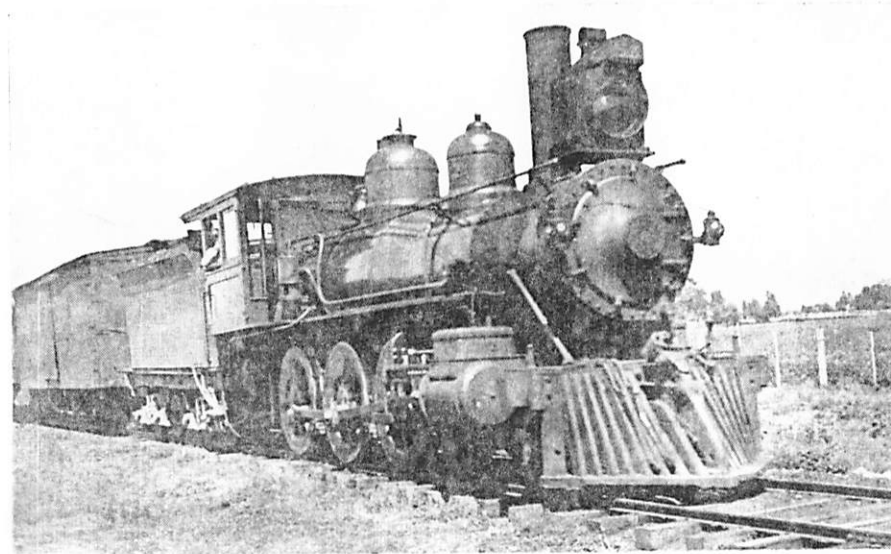
An early sheep camp on the range in the mountains near Charleston.

ton the Hereford headquarters of Utah. John M. Ritchie and the Allen brothers were also breeders of fine Percheron horses.

The railroad came to Charleston in 1899, and the first train arrived Sept. 6 at 2 p.m. The train carried six carloads of people from Provo who had been given free rides as the first passengers traveling



Haying time on the Wright farm in Charleston. Pictured here are William Stacy Wright, William T. Wright, Ethel, Elsie and Sarah Wright.



The first train to arrive in Charleston from Provo on September 6, 1899 at 2 p.m.

to Wasatch County. Nearly all the residents of Charleston were on hand at the depot to welcome the new iron horse. For many years afterward the people in Charleston enjoyed the convenience of two trains a day between Heber and Provo.

The advent of Deer Creek Reservoir and faster means of transportation began to spell the decline of Charleston in the late 1930's. Farm lands were covered with water and many residents moved away. Some who had to leave with their families and give up farms and homes in the wake of the new reservoir were John W. Allen, Thomas Allen, H. F. Watson, John L. Atwood, Heber J. Simmons, William Daybell, George B. Wright, William Boren, George Edward, Perry D. North, Roe Carlile and A. F. Latta.

With many of the residents moving away, the last remaining business in the town, the North Mercantile Co., was forced to close its doors. The Post Office was also discontinued, and patrons placed on rural route service from Heber. This necessitated the retirement of Postmaster Loraine S. Wright, who had served for 28 years. About 1958 the Post Office building was purchased by the Sons of the Pioneers and was moved to Pioneer Village in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Those who have served as Postmasters in Charleston are: Nymphus C. Murdock, Sarah A. Wagstaff, Nellie North, Nellie Webster, Ruby Madsen and Loraine S. Wright.

With all the changes that have occurred in Charleston, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues as the mainstay in the lives of those who remain.



The North Mercantile Store in Charleston, one of the community's prosperous business firms for many years. It was closed down when the Deer Creek project inundated the area.

Those who settled Charleston were members of the Church, seeking freedom and an opportunity to worship according to the dictates of their consciences. Through the years, the L.D.S. Church has been the only religious group in Charleston, and has fostered peace and progress in the community.

David Walker, one of the early Charleston settlers, was the first presiding elder in the community, but served only a short time until he moved back to Salt Lake City. George Noakes was the next presiding elder, and served from about 1865 to 1866 when the settlement was disbanded during the Black Hawk War. Meetings were held in private homes up until that time.

When the people began resettling Charleston in 1867, Elder Noakes was again appointed presiding elder and served about a year. Elder John Watkins of Midway was then called to be presiding elder, and he traveled back and forth from Midway to conduct Church meetings. Since the first bridge over the Provo River between Charleston and Midway was not constructed until 1892, Elder Watkins often had to travel long distances until he could find a place to cross the river.

Elder Watkins directed the building of the first permanent chapel in Charleston in 1873, doing much of the building work himself. Counselors to Elder Watkins were George Powell and Enoch Richins. Later, Elder Powell moved away and Nymphus C. Murdock was called as first counselor. William Wright was first clerk in the Church and served for many years.

Because the settlers in Center Creek depended upon farming for their livelihood, irrigation waters were of utmost importance. Some of the earliest community cooperative projects, as well as some of the disputes, transpired because of the need for irrigation water.

The first settlers in the area laid claim to the water in Center Creek and also some of the smaller streams nearby. This meant that new families coming into the area either had to get permission from the older residents to use the water, or look elsewhere for their irrigation needs. The new settlers felt that there was ample water for everyone if it were to be distributed fairly, but try as they would, they couldn't persuade the original settlers to give up much of it.

As a result, many meetings were held in an effort to solve the problem, and it was finally resolved that the newer settlers would go into Center Creek Canyon and look for sites where reservoirs could be built to hold water that was just going to waste. They located and staked out six reservoir sites, and began the task of building the dams. However, the struggles were still not ended because the early settlers then attempted to stop them from filling the dams. Many lively meetings ensued before it was finally decided to organize a reservoir company in 1879 and subsequently the Center Creek Irrigation and Water Company in 1887. Now 72 years later these two companies were consolidated in 1962.

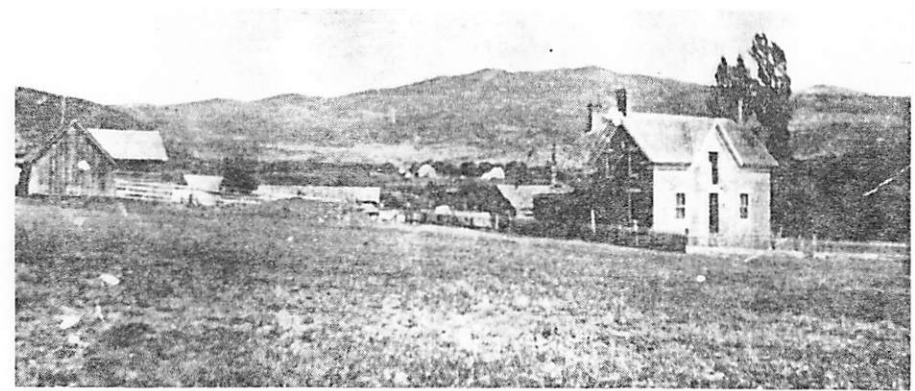
With the organization of the Irrigation Company, the settlement of disputes was left up to the officers and directors, who attempted to be as fair as possible. William Richardson Sr. was the first president of the company. Other officers were Parley Murdock, Archibald Sellers and George Hyrum Sweat.

While the community of Center Creek was growing, another community about two miles north of Center began to develop. This was known as Lake Creek, and began about 1877. Robert Lindsay and his wife Sarah Ann, and William Lindsay and his wife Mary, had been living in Heber, but decided to look around for a site where they might establish more permanent homes. They finally decided on a site three miles east of Heber, near a spring, and in 1877 moved from Heber to begin farming the rich soil.

They built log homes and lived close together until about 1883 when they decided it would be much easier to work the farm land if one family lived in the upper section. They drew lots to see who would move, and Robert got the "cut" to move. He built a two-room log house and later a large, two-story home for his family.

As these men found success in farming the Lake Creek land, others soon began to take up homesteads in the area. Some of these homesteaders included Bengt Peterson, James Nash, William Murdoch Sr., William Baird Sr. and John W. Crook.

An excellent sandstone quarry was developed on property owned by John Crook and Herbert Clegg. The stone was used to build many of



A home built from red sandstone by Thomas Phillips in the early days of the Lake Creek area. This photograph was taken of the home in 1910.

the homes in Center Creek, Lake Creek, Heber and even in Salt Lake City. Some of the buildings constructed of the stone were the Stake House and County Court House, the jail and the Central and North Schools, all in Heber. The sand stone was also used for sidewalks and for lining graves.

Lake Creek settlers also had their irrigation water problems as the population began to grow, and on May 2, 1888 the farmers of the area met to formulate plans for an irrigation company. An organizing committee was formed with Robert Broadhead as chairman and Robert Clegg as secretary. By July 6, 1888 the company organization was ready and Mr. Broadhead was elected as the first president. William Lindsay was named secretary with Henry Chatwin as treasurer and John Lee and Henry Clegg as directors.

First stockholders in the company were Henry Clegg, Robert Broadhead, John Lee, Henry Chatwin, James Nash, Elizabeth Nash, a Mrs. Phillips, John Baird, William Baird, James Baird, Robert and William Lindsay, Milton and William Murdoch, Orson Lee, Abram Hatch, Bengt Peterson, Mrs. Elisha Jones, Richard Jones, Thomas Campbell, William Blake, Mrs. William Cole, Eric Erickson, William Priestly, John Lloyd, Nels and Ludwig Anderson, Thomas and William Clegg, William Davis, Rasmus Miller, Rasmus Anderson and Charles W. Giles.

For several years the Lake Creek settlement continued, and separate school and church organizations were developed. However, it was gradually assimilated into the Center Creek development and became part of that community.

Industry in Center Creek has largely centered around farming. However, one of the first sawmills in the valley was constructed in Center Creek Canyon by Henry McMullin, William M. Wall and James Adams.

A general store was opened by William Baxter, who also operated a creamery. He bought milk from the farmers, made it into butter and